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NEW ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE,
CHIEFLY AS IT RELATES TO A MORE SUCCESSFUL
TREATMENT OF CERTAIN
ABNORMAL CONDITIONS
OF THE
FUNCTIONS OF THE INVOLUNTARY ORGANS,
(The result of 35 Years' Observation and Experience,)
OR,
AN EXPERIMENTAL ENQUIRY
INTO THE
POWER OF APERIENTS.

BY YELVERTON BOSQUET, SURGEON,
Author of the Philosophy of Indigestion; an Essay upon the Power
of Emetine in Incipient Consumption, Asthma, and other
Affections of the Chest, &c. &c.

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NEW ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE,

Chiefly as it relates to a more successful treatment of certain abnormal Conditions of the Functions of the Involuntary Organs. The result of 35 years' observation and experience ; or,

AN EXPERIMENTAL INQUIRY INTO THE POWER OF APERIENTS,

And more especially of the Aperient (deobstruent) Alkaloids, in the prevention and cure of those derangements of the health which are connected with disorders of the stomach, liver, and other alimentary organs, habitual costiveness, jaundice, gout, and rheumatism, uterine obstruction, and menstrual suppression, decay of the strength, and wasting of the body, St. Vitus's Dance, enteric epilepsy, hysteria, hypochondriasis, melancholy, and other affections originating in certain pathological conditions or functional lesions of the nervous centres of the great sympathetics ; to which is prefixed, an Introductory Chapter upon Involuntary Nervous Action, as explanatory of the *modus agendi* of remedial agents upon the animal frame : being a further attempt to direct the attention of the habitual invalid to the secret but extensive influence of the state of the bowels upon human health and human happiness.

By YELVERTON BOSQUET,

SURGEON,

Author of the *Philosophy of Indigestion* ; an *Essay upon the Power of Emetine in Incipient Consumption, Asthma, and other affections of the Chest, &c. &c.*

"Finally, is it not probable that in man, the great sympathetic nerves have a very great share in occasioning a number of diseases, and that the impressions with which patients are affected, are to be referred to their numerous ganglions (nervous centres), while the brain is exclusively the seat of intellect and thought".
Richerand.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

The two orders of nervous organs, which are essential to the bodily constitution of man, and of the most perfect animals, are not more remarkable for the difference they display in their physical organization than in the use for which each is respectively designed; inasmuch, as while the one is destined to regulate functions which are to enable the individual to keep up with the objects which surround him—the relations necessary to his existence; the other constitutes the means by which those organs are actuated through whose instrumentality he grows, is evolved and repairs that waste which his bodily frame incessantly undergoing. In fact, the ganglionic system appears to be endowed with a species of intelligence altogether distinct from that of the brain through whose exercise it regulates the functions of the organs of internal life, in the same manner as the cerebro-spinal system do those of the intellect, and the locomotive powers. Now, if we admit vascular congestion of the brain and spinal marrow, to be the immediate cause of diminished sensibility, and if

* In all the more perfect animals, the ganglionic system, and its various distributions, are entirely different from the nerves derived from the brain and spinal cord; and supply very different organs and textures. This difference is not only evinced by their respective appearances, but also by the very different effects which are observed in them on the application of various excitants and re-agents. These points of dissimilarity evidently show that the ganglia forms an independent system in the animal economy: its chief origin or centre of this system is generally situated in the higher orders of animals especially, about the middle of the body and more immediately supplies with the principle which actuates them, the organs of digestion, chylification, and circulation, while the expenditure of the vital influence is greatest; but it seems probable, from a separate ganglion or plexus being generally assigned to each important secreting or animalising organ, that the centre or prime source of vital influence does not supply the whole vitality to the individual or organs textures; but that the vital influence proceeding from this centre, is reinforced by that which is produced by the subordinate ganglia, and is not reinforced but modified by them, in the various organs, so as to give rise to the specific difference of functions which they perform.

peded action in the organs, over whose functions this part of the nervous system presides, so by a parity of reasoning, we may conclude that a similar condition of the ganglionic system necessarily produces that state of the intestinal canal and vascular structure of the liver, which consists in insensibility to the stimulus of their natural contents; and as the simular ganglion may be considered, more immediately, the brain of the digestive organs, and as these organs are more liable than any other to become a centre of fluxion, in consequence of the numerous aggressions to which they are continually exposed,* it is not difficult to conceive how the ganglionic system thus becomes the seat of that congestion which terminates in the morbid condition already alluded to. If reason, then, as well as analogy, support the opinion here advanced, with regard to the medium through which the health thus becomes assaulted, experience equally justifies the adoption of the practice of directing the force of our remedial agency, through the same channel. Aperients thus become our sheet anchor; not, however, in the sense in which this term is usually understood, for daily observation must satisfy us that a great majority of those in common use, constitute a very inadequate means of exciting that salutary re-action upon which the success of our curative efforts depends; the cause of which appears to be, that as this class of aperients exert their influence upon a part of the intestinal canal situate at a distance comparatively remote from the

* Taking it, then, for granted that the increased demand for secreted fluids renders an augmented action and an increased afflux of blood into the furnishing organs necessary for their production, and that the stomach and liver are more liable than any other organs to be thus acted upon, from their more direct and more frequent exposure to so many irritating aggressions, it is evident that the increased tide of blood which thus flows into the gastrohepatic system must ultimately be a cause of disease even the simple prolongation of the functional excitement necessary to digestion on ordinary occasions, continued from meal to meal without permitting the organs so engaged to revert to a state of repose, is of itself sufficient to constitute a morbid state for, as all organs require alternate periods of exercise and rest, their incessant activity first irritates, then exhausts, and, as disorganises the structure of the parts.—Johnson.

nervous centre, they are incapable of pro requisite degree of impression. Whereas, w of medicine is employed which expends its the stomach and duodenum, the excitementally propagated to the semilunar gan through its re-action to the organs over w tions it presides. Nor is this a matter of me tion, but of positive and direct experience requiring a judicious selection and exhibi appropriate remedy to carry it at any time in effect. By what collocation of materia however, or by what arrangement of th matter which compose them, one substa produce this effect more than another, being evidently beyond the reach of human inve shall not of course presume to determine, bu articles of the materia medica, whose principle is of an alkaline nature, or constit in the language of modern chemistry, is alkaloid, appear to be eminently endowed property of exciting the sensorium aliments consequently of restoring the balance of org of this system, to that condition upon which depends, and as analogy justifies the infe these preparations may possess a metallic* b than the true alkalies, may not the phenom from their application to the stomach and be accounted for upon the principle of galva And if so, may not a similar conclusion be d regard to the *modus operandi* of the alk alkaline earths, and the metallic oxydes animal frame? This, however, I only n *passant*, as an idea which, if pursued by tho for the task, might eventually lead to usef my present object, and the purport of the being not to speculate upon possible conting to direct the attention to a class of reme

* The recent researches of Professor Faraday in e justify the above opinion, as far, at least, as hyd earned, which is presumed by him to be a metal nature as to require only the common temperatur phere to render it permanently gaseous.

general adoption, as a means of health, the present condition of society* render not so much a matter of choice, as of imperious necessity, as sufficiently substantiated by the evidence contained in the preceding notes; not to mention the personal experience of nineteen individuals out of every twenty in civilized life; but to revert once more to the subject of sensorial action, it may, perhaps, be thought singular by those who would locate the soul in the brain, that there should exist two distinct sources of intelligence—two centres of perception in the same body: for to say that the semi-lunar ganglion does not take cognizance of what is going forward in the organs, over whose functions it presides, would be about as well founded as to deny to the cerebro-spinal system, its influence upon muscular motion.

Now, as we can neither move a limb, use a sense, nor perform the most trifling action under the command of the will,* without the the intervention of the

* The class of aperients are of mere importance to the healing art than all the numerous objects of the *materia medica* besides, since they are in a limited way essential to our existence; as an hypothesis in support of the absolute necessity of attending to the state of the alimentary canal, I would submit, that as a river or aqueduct, into which heterogeneous matter is continually thrown, becomes, more or less, impregnated therewith in its body, so, while any mass of fancied nutriment pursues its course through the alimentary canal, a slimy deposit takes place on the internal surface of the intestines, which their discerning vessels have not power to remove, for, although it may be concluded that nature has provided for this, yet it is to be remembered that the torpor of the alimentary system induced by modern habits of life, the unnatural and adulterated state of innumerable articles of food, added to the grovelling ignorance of cooks, render her ordinary provisions insufficient for the well-being of the system, and the discharge of its functions.

The great sympathetic nerves are to be considered the bond which unites the organs of the nutritive functions; the numerous ganglions which are distributed along their course, divide them into so many small systems, amid these bulgings, considered by many physiologists, as so many little brains, none is of more important than the semilunar ganglion, situated behind the organ which occupy the epigastric region. Now, if we consider what are the organs to which the functions of assimilation are entrusted we shall find that the action of the greater number is wholly dependent of the control of the will; thus, the heart, the stomach, the intestinal canal, do not obey the will, but act and

latter. Neither can the heart beat, the stomach nor the liver secrete the bile, without the inter-
 of the former. What then is the inference?
 this:—that the ideas communicated through
 medium of the senses, are to the brain what the
 tions communicated through the medium
 stomach and duodenum, are to the semi-lunar ganglion
 a cause of, more or less, excitement; or a source
 more or less, depression. I say more or less: I
 certain that the power of perception varies at
 as much in one case as in the other; and as, when
 senses are dull, the intellect impaired, or the voice
 muscles paralytic, we look for the causes in the cere-
 spinal system; so, when the functions of the heart,
 stomach, or other vital organs are deranged, we
 similar conclusion, with regard to the ganglionic
 system. The treatment, therefore, is obvious: it
 not be directed so much upon the individual organ,
 upon the source of the influence by which it is
 actuated, as may be exemplified in cerebral congestion,
 by the effects of vascular depletion, in restoring
 exercise of the intellect, and of the locomotive power.
 As this is a resource, however, which, for

without any interference on our part. On the other hand
 great sympathetics supply the diaphragm, the rectum,
 bladder, with nerves of sensation only. A necessary
 for, if, as is the case with the heart, the stomach, &c., they
 had received their nerves of motion from the ganglionic
 their action would likewise have been independent of
 and, thus, the bladder and rectum placed at the extremity
 digestive apparatus, and destined to serve as reservoir
 excrementitious residue of our solid and liquid aliments
 have been constantly evacuating their contents as fast as
 substances, destined to be for a time retained within them,
 their cavity.

* Violent blows or contusions on the epigastric region (per
 stomach) when they do not immediately destroy the
 subjected to them, depress in a very remarkable manner,
 energies of the system; the animal heat is uncommonly dim
 the surface is cold and pale, the pulse slow, and scarcely
 perceptible, and the breathing feeble and very slow. An ana-
 effect, in some respects, is produced by concussion of the
 lunar ganglion, as that which follows concussion of the
 the former, the vital or organic actions are either ex-
 destroyed; in the latter, the animal or voluntary operations
 are suspended.

reasons, we do not so directly possess in ganglial congestion, our only alternative, or at least our best substitute, is the use of aperients: nor is the relief more striking in the one case than in the other, in restoring the vital and alimentary organs to that condition in which they again become sensible to the stimulus of their natural contents; for, as there is no positive debility in these cases, as it is only the source of the influence by which certain organs are actuated, the prime mover or main wheel of the machine, as it were, which is oppressed or clogged with blood; it necessarily follows, that whatever tends to diminish this congestion, tends to restore, in equal degree, the action of the part, and, consequently, the action of the subordinate parts over whose functions it presides. The author has now only to add that, though advocating in common with those who have preceded him in the same path, the superior utility of aperients as a means of health, yet, as he has ventured to differ from them, not only in regard to the principle upon which that utility is founded, but likewise in relation to the specific nature of the aperients* which are suited to such occasions, he has been induced to submit to the attention of the reader his reasons for so doing. Through the medium of ~~these~~ observations, with the view of justifying such deviations from the more usual practice, as exemplified in the treatment of the following cases—cases which he regrets the limits of this little volume will not admit of his giving more in detail; but which,

These inconveniences have probably induced persons subject to them to try repeated doses of salts, magnesia, or some simple domestic aperient which, in nine cases out of ten, afford no sort of benefit, because they have operated only partially, and exerted no influence whatever on the detained excrement; it is, however, imagined that no fault can remain internally, because each successive dose of the domestic remedy has produced watery evacuations; but watery evacuations may be excited for weeks and months together, and still the offending cause remain, since inefficient doses of saline and other aperients do not exert that influence necessary to the accomplishment of the object in view. This circumstance alone shows the impropriety of persons trifling in such a manner with their health, since a proper regard should be had to the species and combinations of the aperients, which alone are suited to such occasions.—Howe.

nevertheless, he trusts will prove sufficiently explicit answer the chief purpose designed by their publication, namely, that of more clearly pointing out the nature of the diseases in which the use of this form of medicine is indicated; and thereby of more unequivocally deciding the validity of their title to that eminent rank* which they now hold among our remedial agents.

N.B.—As the following cases have been selected from some hundreds of a similar description, which have fallen under the author's care, the intervals of time which occasionally occur between the dates of cases immediately succeeding each other, may thus be satisfactorily accounted for.

* The profession is much indebted to Mr. Abernethy, for the attention he has paid to the medical treatment of surgical patients and for the many important facts which his sagacity has discovered in the secret but extensive influence of the state of the bowels upon the diseases which are called local; if the state of the bowels, then, has such a remarkable effect in producing inflammations, ulcers, and tumours, as they are proved to have, we not common sense, as well as the experience of ages, dictate to the necessity of such a course of medicine as will secure a healthy discharge of bile, and consequently a free and natural state of the bowels before an operation is performed; and surely after an operation we ought to foresee that confinement brings on such an accumulation of matter in the bowels, and such torpor of the abdominal viscera, that the patient languishes, becomes weak and irritable, and then the healthy granulations become pale, and the cure is arrested.—*Sir Charles Bell*

ILLUSTRATION I.

August 20, 1829.

S. H., a married female, aged 28, has laboured for some time under loss of appetite, parched tongue, head-ache, nausea, constipation, disturbed sleep, and lassitude after the least exertion; the pulse is slow, the urine variable, and the motions scanty and unnatural. She has by my advice commenced a course of aperients this morning.

21st.—The symptoms as yesterday. The aperient has not as yet produced any effect upon the bowels; it is therefore to be continued in increased doses.

23rd.—The bowels are still as obstinate as ever, though she has already taken as much aperient medicine as would, under ordinary circumstances, have produced very copious evacuations.

25th.—Still no effect upon the bowels further than occasional griping pains, which, however, I look upon in this instance as an auspicious omen, inasmuch as it indicates a tendency to re-action.

27th.—A hard scybalous and offensive motion this morning, with considerable increase of the griping pains.

29th.—All day yesterday the subject of this case was severely griped, and vomited at intervals quantities of green slime mixed with bile; she had likewise a very copious evacuation from the bowels of feculent matter, as black and nearly of the consistence of tar.

Sept. 1st.—The bowels to-day, and more or less since last report, have continued at intervals to discharge copiously the same sort of matter as that last alluded to, with infinite relief to the patient; in fact, many of the symptoms have already disappeared; she is, however, considerably debilitated, and is therefore allowed a more generous diet.

4th.—S. H. is now decidedly convalescent; her appetite is still improving, her bowels are perfectly regular, and the discharge natural, her looks are cheerful and healthy; she is therefore to take the aperient only occasionally and in diminished doses.

13th.—I have seen this patient to-day, and

experienced much satisfaction in being able to pronounce her in perfect health.

N. B. The subject of the above case had been in ill health, as already stated, for several weeks previous to her applying to me, and had been under the influence of a variety of treatment; but it must be sufficiently manifest from the torpid condition of the bowels and the nature of their contents when that torpor was overcome, that any other treatment than that of aperients would have been worse than useless.

ILLUSTRATION II.

September 30, 1831.

W. E., aged 13, complains of having lost the power of the will over the muscles of the arms and lower extremities, which are frequently agitated with convulsive motions. She has been under a course of aperients with metallic tonics, but as yet without relief; her appetite is good notwithstanding, and her bowels soft and without fulness. I have altered the aperient which she had been previously using and likewise ordered her to omit the tonic medicine for the present.

Oct. 1st.—One scanty stool this morning of watery consistence and greenish hue: an indifferent night.

2nd.—Since last visit she has had four extremely offensive stools from the aperient she took yesterday, which were of a deep green; she vomited twice this morning and still complains of nausea. The spasmodic action of the muscles, however, are less violent, and apparently more under controul. She is to repeat the aperient.

3d.—A quiet night. The fœces this morning abundant—still green and extremely fetid; the spasmodic action less and less violent. The aperient to be continued.

4th.—The discharge from the bowels not so abundant—more natural, but still extremely offensive: *muscular action* more under controul; her appetite *not so good*; she complains of thirst and a difficulty of *swallowing*. To omit the aperient to-day, and to

use a more generous diet, with wine and water occasionally.

5th.—Four stools since last night without medicine, and of more natural appearance; bowels rather tender, pulse feeble, and countenance dejected. The aperient to be taken in smaller doses every sixth hour; diet and wine and water to be continued as last ordered.

6th.—Involuntary motions much subsided, countenance still pale and anxious, pulse more feeble, declines food, but relishes the wine and water.

7th.—Symptoms as yesterday: two green stools.

8th.—Rather more appetite to day; wine still relished; a copious motion green and very offensive.

9th.—Evacuation from the bowels, copious; indifferent night; appetite mends, free from the spasmodic action of the voluntary muscles.

10th.—Bowels more at rest, but what has been passed since yesterday nearly a perfect black.

11th.—Much better this morning, slept nearly all night; abundant discharge from the bowels, spasms nearly gone, appetite good, pulse calm, but still feeble, expression of countenance more cheerful. The aperient to be continued in smaller doses, and at intervals of eight hours.

12th.—Another good night. Discharge from the bowels mostly green and partly natural, intermixed with scybala; spasmodic action has not been noticed since yesterday.

13th.—Convalescent; discharge from the bowels natural; voice strong, and free from hesitation, skin of a natural heat, complexion much improved.

15th.—Bowels still active, and the motions free from unusual fetor; pulse slow and regular.

17th.—No aperient taken for the last two days, the stools being natural and sufficiently copious; good nights and gaining strength.

18th.—The bowels fuller this morning, and the stools again more fetid and less natural. The aperient to be resumed.

20th.—Not so well to-day—looks paler and less cheerful; bowels free, discharge green and scybala

22d.—Much better to-day, more cheerful and less taciturn; stools copious and again more natural, appetite good, tongue clean, free from spasm, but rather more feeble than for some days back.

24th.—Convalescence advances, talkative with playfulness of manner, fulness of bowels subsided, stools perfectly natural, articulation distinct, evidently gaining flesh.

28th.—Continues to mend; has taken no medicine for the last four days.

31st.—Saw the patient to-day, and had the pleasure of being able to apprise her friends, that my further attendance was unnecessary, admonishing them, however, to attend to the state of her bowels, and if necessary to administer an aperient now and then.

ILLUSTRATION III.

January 3, 1832.

W. S., aged 8 years, has come under my care to-day; he complains of pain in the right side, cough head-ache, and loss of appetite, his countenance is bloated and sallow, his pulse slow, his skin is hot, and his tongue very much furred. I have ordered him an aperient which is to be repeated in eight hours if the bowels are not previously opened.

4th.—A scanty clay-colored stool; the bowels rather distended and somewhat painful. The aperient to be repeated as before.

5th.—The bowels more active this morning, but the discharge still vitiated with increased fulness and pain. To go on with the aperient.

6th.—The discharge from the bowels again more scanty to-day, bad night, nausea, increasing debility.

7th.—A very copious motion this morning, extremely fetid, and of a dark green. To continue the aperient.

8th.—Bowels still active, stools clay-colored and offensive, belly full and tense, disgust to food. *Aperient continued*; wine and water allowed occasionally.

9th.—Several stools within the last twelve hours *thin, fetid, and otherwise unnatural*; bowels more

distended, but now not painful on pressure; increased emaciation, with quick and feeble pulse; appetite fickle, but rather more food taken.

10th.—Stools more natural to-day, but still copious; bad night, and much exhausted this morning. The aperient to be omitted for the present; nourishing food, with wine and water at stated periods.

11th.—Another bad night; bowels less active, but what has passed from them of more natural appearance; the pain, however, has returned, the wine and water refused this morning, slight nausea, anxious expression of countenance.

12th.—All the bad symptoms less threatening, wine and food taken willingly, distension of the bowels subsided considerably, a better night, countenance more cheerful.

16th.—Convalescence still advances, stools paler, but otherwise natural, appetite increasing, better nights, tension of the bowels nearly gone, no pain.

20th.—Still more improved since last report, gaining flesh rapidly, stools now perfectly natural, and not too copious.

24th.—Patient in perfect health. An aperient still to be taken, now and then; warm clothing and nourishing diet. Case concluded.

ILLUSTRATION IV.

December 10, 1832.

Miss B., aged 22, has been troubled for some time with occasional head-ache, pain at her stomach, palpitation, and disturbed sleep; she is also restless with a sense of debility, her countenance is pale and anxious, her skin yellow, her bowels confined, and her appetite fickle, the menstrual flux, scanty and irregular, attributes her indisposition to cold. A full dose of aperient medicine to be taken immediately.

11th.—A scanty stool this morning, otherwise no alteration. Aperient to be repeated.

12th.—The discharge from the bowels more copious lumpy, and extremely offensive. To continue *aperient*.

14th.—This morning the tongue appears quiet, the countenance cheerful and clearer, the other symptoms as last report.

16th.—Bowels still loose, and motions less offensive, not so listless, walks with a more steady gait, the voice stronger and less languid, appetite improved, slept well the last two nights.

18th.—Has been out of order for the last time, discharge more abundant than for several days, says she feels lighter and better to day than done yet. Aperient to be omitted.

24th.—This patient has called upon me this morning, and to all appearance is now in good health, have, therefore, thought it unnecessary to prescribe; I have, however, advised her to attend to the state of her bowels, and be more circumspect in diet, a thing she had previously much neglected.

ILLUSTRATION V.

September 10

H.P., aged 13, has been for several weeks, to say ever since she was alarmed by a bull while passing through some fields, subject to spasmodic action of the muscles of the upper and lower limbs, and especially of those of the trunk of the body, and so that she is unable to preserve the erect posture for any length of time without danger of falling; attempting to walk, one leg has the appearance of being paralytic; her articulation and power of action are also, more or less, impeded; her voice, however, is good, tongue very little furred, rests indifferently well; her bowels are habitually confined.

12th.—An aperient taken on the 10th, and yesterday in an increased dose, has not operated, is to be continued every six hours until the bowels are fully opened.

18th.—A very copious scybalous motion, dark, intermixed with green and black, and intolerable.

14th.—The bowels are not so free as yesterday.

the discharge equally unnatural and offensive. The aperient to be continued.

15th.—Feces more abundant, less fetid, but very bilious; spasmodic action for the first time since the commencement of the treatment, less violent, and the action of the muscles much more under the controul of the will.

16th.—Bowels more open, stools soft and more bilious, slight nausea, appetite diminished.

17th.—Two very abundant discharges from the bowels, the first hard and scybalous, the other soft and pale yellow.

18th to 21st.—The feces have been for the last four days very various in color, smell, and consistence; the involuntary motions of the limbs, however, are considerably decreased, she swallows without difficulty, and speaks without apparent effort or hesitation.

30th.—This patient still continues to improve gradually since last report, her bowels are more easily moved, and the stools more natural in color, form, and consistence; she makes use of full diet, with a little wine and water occasionally; she is, however, as yet feeble and considerably emaciated, but has in a great measure recovered the power of sustentation and progression; an aperient has been taken daily, sometimes in smaller, sometimes in larger doses.

Oct. 5th.—The spasmodic action has been observed for the last few days only, after bodily exertion, the articulation is still free and distinct, the countenance looks more cheerful, and she acknowledges she feels much stronger, the bowels regular, and motions natural.

10th.—Since last report the health of the subject of this case has mended surprisingly, her color, flesh, and strength are returning rapidly; her appetite and digestion are good, she sleeps well, and has had a regular motion daily, for several days in succession, without the aid of medicine.

15th.—I have seen this patient to day, she appears in perfect health; I have not, therefore, prescribed for her, as I consider the case thus happily concluded.

ILLUSTRATION VI.

November 15, 1833.

H. H., aged 11, complains of frequent twitchings (spasmodic contractions of the inferior extremities, which impede his walking steadily, and causes him frequently to stumble; his left leg appears paralysed, his features are likewise very much distorted at times, and his countenance has an expression of fatuity, his articulation is very imperfect, he sleeps well notwithstanding, has a good appetite, his tongue is clean, his bowels habitually confined, has had no medical assistance until now.

16th.—Had an aperient in a full dose yesterday, which has brought away a considerable quantity of pale feces, of a sour and peculiarly disagreeable odour. The aperient to be repeated to night at bed time.

17th.—A free discharge from the bowels, of the color and consistence of that last mentioned; spasmodic action something subsided.

18th to 22nd.—For the last four days the stools have been copious and lumpy, and varying in colour from a deep green to a light yellow; still very offensive.

22d to 26th.—Feces still abundant, but more natural in color and odor, bowels more readily acted upon, and consequently requiring smaller doses of aperient medicine; spasmodic action more under command; walked yesterday some distance without tottering; speaks better, countenance more lively and intelligent, tongue somewhat furred, appetite craving.

29th.—Feces are now of a deep yellow and less lumpy, smell natural.

Dec. 3d.—The stools to day are again more lumpy than for several days past, there is slight nausea and occasional griping; appetite less keen, tongue much furred, countenance still more intelligent, but manner rather excited.

6th.—Several black stools yesterday, with severe griping and occasional sickness; better to day than he *has been yet*; manner more natural and cheerful, *tongue cleaner*, pulse regular, appetite moderate, *complains of debility*, but perfectly free from spasm.

10th.—Bowels more regular and discharge perfect.

natural; good nights; voluntary muscles perfectly under the controul of the will; confirmed convalescence.

15th.—This patient is now free from all complaint, and improves in looks daily; has taken no medicine since the 5th, the bowels being perfectly regular without it.

ILLUSTRATION VII.

March 30th, 1834.

L. M., aged 21, has been for some time troubled with a spasmodic affection of the lower extremities, and occasionally of the trunk of the body, which visit her several times a day at irregular intervals, and usually last from ten to twenty minutes. She likewise complains of flying pains in her back and breast, with occasional head-ache; her pulse is quick and feeble, her face alternately pale and flushed, her skin hot, and her bowels confined; her menstruation has been obstructed for the last six months. Ordered an aperient which is to be repeated in six or eight hours.

April 1st.—A costive stool this morning, two spasmodic attacks since yesterday. To continue the aperient.

2d.—No stool from the aperient of which she took two full doses in the course of yesterday, and one this morning; complains much of head-ache; spasmodic attacks not so frequent.

3d.—Several black stools this morning; rested well last night; no return of spasm since yesterday.

4th.—Spasmodic fits keep off; bowels active, discharge lumpy and fetid, pulse 80, soft and full. The aperient as usual.

5th.—Bowels still free, discharge natural, no return of spasm, increased cheerfulness and improved looks.

7th.—Confirmed convalescence, bowels act without medicine, tongue clean, appetite good; has returned to her accustomed avocation, feeling perfectly well, though not so robust as before her illness.

18th.—N.B. This young woman has just returned home, having taken an excursion by my advice to see her friends at some distance; she still remains in perfect health. The catemenia returned three days of sufficient quantity.

ILLUSTRATION VIII.

June 18th, 1834.

S. T., aged 20, has for some days laboured under head-ache, a sense of tightness in the chest and across the stomach; her countenance is dull and pale, and she appears to be considerably debilitated, having vomited last night about a pint of dark blood. She has applied to me this morning for advice. I have ordered her an aperient to be taken in divided doses at short intervals, until such time as the bowels are freely acted upon.

19th.—No head-ache to day; uneasiness about the chest and stomach rather diminished; one confined motion, dark and fetid, no further discharge of blood. To go on with the aperient.

21st.—Bowels still continue torpid; about a tea-cupful of blood vomited this morning; breathing rather short. To continue the aperient.

22d.—A scanty evacuation of the bowels this morning; a slight return of hæmorrhage, in other respects no alteration in the symptoms.

23d.—Bowels still obstinate; one confined motion; no further discharge of blood; breathing better.

24th.—Pain at the pit of the stomach, slight cough, pulse quick and sharp, white tongue, one loose motion, hæmorrhage still holds off.

25th.—Hæmorrhage recurred again to day to the amount of about half-a-pint; bowels more active, stools green and offensive; considerable debility.

26th.—Copious discharge from the bowels, fetid and nearly black, countenance more cheerful and healthy, and otherwise much relieved, no further bloody vomiting.

June 27th.—Symptoms of returning convalescence; breathing free, no uneasiness at the chest or stomach, a good night, strength and looks improving, appetite good; no return of the hæmorrhage.

29th.—Stools natural, bowels readily acted upon, convalescence advancing rapidly.

July 1st.—No hæmorrhage now for several days, bowels regular without medicine; thinner than before

her illness, but otherwise apparently in her usual health ; walked two miles yesterday without fatigue ; countenance lively, complexion much improved.

21st.—I have seen this patient to day ; she still continues to enjoy good health.

ILLUSTRATION IX.

August 5, 1834.

J. H., aged 10, complains of frequent head-ache, and pain about the navel, disturbed sleep with frightful dreams ; her bowels are full and tense, her pulse quick and feeble, alternately costive and purged, tongue foul, appetite craving, face pale, and body emaciated. An aperient to be taken immediately.

6th.—Free discharge from the bowels, stools lumpy and green. Aperient to be continued.

7th.—Scanty evacuation of the bowels to day, and chiefly consisting of scybala of a deep green approaching to black.

8th.—Copious evacuation since yesterday, clay-colored, lumpy, and offensive, occasional nausea, with griping pains, increased debility, countenance pale and anxious. The aperient to be persisted in, in diminished doses ; wine and water, and full diet.

9th.—Profuse vomiting last night of green slime and vitiated bile ; feels better this morning, bowels greatly gone down, pulse improved, tongue cleaner, motions more natural, considerably debilitated, countenance still pale, but less expressive of suffering.

10th.—Bowels active, stools continue natural ; food, and wine and water much relished ; more cheerful, no sickness or griping, distension of the abdomen much diminished.

13th.—Quiet nights and sufficient sleep ; countenance livelier and more natural, complexion healthy, appetite good but not craving, bowels still active. No aperient to be taken to day ; animal diet, and wine and water to be continued.

15th.—Free of complaint ; stools formed, but rather pale ; convalescence advances.

17th.—Stools perfectly natural to day, has taken no medicine since the 13th, says she feels perfectly well.

27th.—The subject of this case has called upon me to day in perfect health.

ILLUSTRATION X.

February 19, 1835.

W. C., aged 23, having eaten heartily of some fat meat yesterday, was in a few hours after attacked with shivering, head-ache, nausea, oppression at the stomach, had a restless night, and rose this morning in a high fever; his tongue furred, with bitter taste in his mouth, and his bowels pained and much distended; in consequence of these symptoms he has applied to me for relief.

20th.—Two loose stools from the aperient ordered yesterday; much depression, pulse frequent, urine turbid. To continue the aperient.

21st.—Several offensive evacuations since last night, symptoms otherwise unaltered.

22nd.—Bowels still loose, the stools unnatural, and offensive in the extreme, abdomen less distended, tongue cleaner, head-ache gone. To continue the aperient.

23d.—Much better to day; bowels still active, stools green and lumpy; a good night; appetite returning.

24th.—Bowels still loose, stools more natural, no pain or nausea; complains of debility.

26th.—Convalescent, good appetite, bowels regular, pulse calm and slow, sleeps well, feels stronger to day.

28th.—A large motion last night, almost black, attended with griping and nausea; feels better than he has done yet; good appetite, and easy digestion, looks cheerful and lively, talks of returning to his occupation in a day or two. Full diet; an aperient to be taken to night at bed-time.

March 2d.—This patient is now in perfect health, and has resumed his employment.

ILLUSTRATION XI.

April 10, 1835.

P.C., aged 21, having made too free at dinner with some food to which she had been unaccustomed, was suddenly attacked with oppression at the stomach, prostration of strength, shivering and nausea, and which symptoms continuing, she has now applied to me for advice. The tongue is furred, with a disagreeable taste in the mouth; the bowels are confined.

11th.—To the former symptoms are added to-day a dry cough, high fever, and rapid pulse, with occasional delirium: no evacuation from the bowels. The aperient given yesterday to be repeated in a larger dose.

12th.—Bowels slightly moved, acid eructations, cough increased. Aperient medicine to be continued.

13th.—Tongue cleaner, thirst, heat of skin, and oppression at the stomach evidently abated; cough incessant, bowels rather more active. An aperient every eight hours.

14th.—All the symptoms much alleviated with the exception of the cough, which appears to be more violent than ever: one motion rather scanty and scybalous.

15th.—A copious, dark-coloured, and extremely fetid motion this morning, which has afforded considerable relief; tongue quite clean, free from fever, pulse calm but feeble; would have rested well last night but for the cough; thinks, however, this latter symptom is relieved since the last evacuation from the bowels.

17th.—Bowels very active since last night, passed this morning several motions, resembling tar in colour and consistence, since which time the cough seems to have entirely left her; complains of weakness, but continues free from pain and fever.

19th.—No return of cough, bowels still in motion, stools deep green, and intolerably offensive.

25th.—Since last report the patient continued to mend daily, the stools became natural in the course of the following day, and so continue; the cough has never once troubled her, and she appears to day so far

stored to health, that I have thought it unnecessary to prescribe for her.

ILLUSTRATION XII.

August 31, 1835.

T. K., aged 24, a young man possessing, in an exquisite degree, the usual characteristics of the atrabilious temperament, black hair and eyes, dark complexion, and robust constitution; had been attacked some months ago with intermittent fever, which hung about him for a length of time, since which period he has suffered much from low spirits, and inertness of mind; in consequence of these symptoms he has applied to me.

Sept. 1st.—Complains to day of head-ache, increased mental depression,* his bowels are hard and distended, his tongue loaded, and his looks gloomy. No effect from the aperient ordered yesterday, which is therefore to be continued.

3rd.—Something better to-day, more lively and cheerful, head-ache relieved, one bound stool, green and scybalous. To go on with the aperient.

5th.—Bowels more active, stools black and fetid, abdomen softer, and less swollen; spirits continue lighter.

* In just as eminent a degree as depressing passions promote this kind of internal mischief, does the circumstance of neglecting to promote a free daily action of the intestinal canal create despondency. All the particular circumstances which have been enumerated with respect to the alimentary organs, are fully established, and melancholy often runs on to active madness, the circulation is labored, the tongue furred, the countenance dejected, the eye turgid and colored with bile, the skin partakes of the same tinge, the face is beset with eruptions, the rest is broken, the sleep is haunted with frightful dreams, the urine is passed frequently without color, or occasionally deposits a sediment; the patient, perhaps, in the very lap of comfort, feels the storm of adversity thickening around him, he mistrusts his confidential friends, and while he shuns their presence, dislikes to be alone. By judicious treatment, all these frightful circumstances are often dispelled in a few hours, frequently in a few days, and but few weeks are required for the restoration of the accustomed health and animal spirits.—Hare.

7th.—Passed since the last report, an incredible quantity of excrementitious matter of almost all colors, white, green, and clay-colored. Spirits and looks more and more improved.

10th.—This invalid, by the continued use of aperients, is now perfectly convalescent; the stools are natural and sufficiently copious, his manner calm, and his ideas cheerful, his eye, and the general expression of his countenance animated; he sleeps sound, and without dreaming, and, in fact, feels in every other respect in so much better health, that he proposes to take a journey to see his friends, which, in all such cases, tends very much to the re-establishment of the health.

ILLUSTRATION XIII.

Miss A., aged 44, consulted me in the month of August, 1831, in consequence of an indisposition under which she had laboured for several months previously. The most prominent symptoms of which were an accelerated circulation on the slightest bodily exertion, coldness of the extremities, constipation, an unusual sensation in her legs and thighs, which she expressed by saying they felt as if made of cork; to these were added great irritability of temper, and a wild* and irregular force of expression, and earnestness of manner, on the most trivial occasions. The tongue was usually furred in the morning, the urine alternately pale and high-coloured, the sleep unsound, and her general feelings uncomfortable in the extreme; there

* The surgeon is often called in to witness symptoms which are distinguishable to every eye, but whose causes lie deep in the constitution. Ulcers on the tongue, inflammation in the throat, films and opacities in the eyes, scabs and eruptions on the skin, swellings on the joints and bones. I must beg my reader to observe how these symptoms arise, and with how many other symptoms of bad health they are combined, if he finds his patient indolently reclining, taciturn, moody, and abstracted; if only leading him into conversation, there is a wild irregular force of expression; if he complains of pain, where there is no actual tenderness or pressure, if the epigastrium is tender, the tongue foul, and bowels irregular, there is more general disease than local malady.
—Sir Charles Bell.

was not, however, any distension of the bowels, nor was the appetite much impaired. Previous to her applying to me, she had taken various tonics, as bitters, steel, &c. &c., but without producing any sensible remission of the symptoms. I confess that at first, from the apparent obscurity of the case, I felt considerably at a loss what treatment to adopt for the best, until at length recollecting that Sir C. Bell, in an introductory chapter to his system of surgery, had alluded to symptoms of a similar character as connected with congestion of the alimentary organs, I adopted at once an aperient practice; but such was the general torpor of the intestinal canal, that several days elapsed before I could make any impression, though I daily and assiduously administered appropriate aperients. After some time, however, the bowels became more active, but still the symptoms did not remit; I therefore persevered, until at length upon visiting my patient one morning, I found her in bed violently sick, and vomiting a quantity of what appeared to me a mixture of black blood, with matter of the color and consistence of tar; having likewise passed by the bowels, two chamber utensils full of something of a similar description. Feeling perfectly assured that this was the crisis of the disease which I had for some time expected, I interfered no further than to order something to allay the sickness, and in the course of the day the purging and vomiting ceased, leaving, however, the patient much exhausted, but otherwise free from all her bad symptoms. On calling on her the ensuing morning, I found her still better; and in a few days, by adopting a light and moderately nutritious diet, she became perfectly restored to the best health.

ILLUSTRATION XIV.

F. H., aged 40, has been for some years subject to violent spasmodic attacks of the muscles of the *extremities and trunk* of the body, but in consequence of *having become more familiar with the premonitory symptoms*, he has been able for some time to keep them *more under controul*, by applying for assistance on the

first warning of an approaching paroxysm, and has therefore suffered comparatively little from the disease of late. On these occasions, with the exception of twice, I have always attended him, and on the first and two subsequent attacks, adopted the usual routine treatment of tonics, &c. ; but being dissatisfied with my want of success, I determined to try the effect of aperients, since which period I have always been able to remove the attack in one quarter of the time, or if applied to on the first warning, to prevent its accession; but of all the cases of the kind which have yet come under my observation, I have not met with one in which the discharge from the patient's bowels have been so thoroughly vitiated and unnatural; nor in which it has taken more powerful doses of aperient medicine to effect their expulsion. Indeed it is only a very few weeks ago since the subject of this case applied to me in consequence of his experiencing certain symptoms which always precede a paroxysm, for a dose of aperient medicine, which, had I not been thoroughly acquainted with his condition, I dared not have ventured upon; notwithstanding this, however, I had to repeat it three several times before it produced the slightest impression, but at length when it did operate, it brought away such a quantity of feculent matter and of such an unnatural appearance, as would scarcely be credited by any but those who are familiarized with the inspection of the alvine discharges on similar occasions.

ADDENDA.

"Nec araneorum sane texus ideo melior, quia ex se fila gignunt, nec noster vilior quia ex alienis libamus ut apes."—*Jus. J. Lips. Monit. Polit.*

"Physicians are generally guided in their early professional pursuits, by the doctrines delivered in the schools, by the sentiments of the authors whom they have chiefly consulted, and by the practice of those whose example they have proposed to follow. Subsequent information, however, and experience,

quired by personal intercourse with the sick, incline them to modify, more or less, the opinions and practice which they have originally adopted. On this account, medicine has been said to be fluctuating and uncertain, but with no good reason. The changes which are introduced, result from the zeal and exertions of practitioners, and tend to improve the science when they are directed by good sense, and attentive observation. To represent, therefore, the practice of medicine as variable, in consequence of innovations, inseparable from its progressive state, is to take an unfair and partial view of the case. On the same ground, and with equal justice, all the practical arts are liable to a similar imputation.

Practitioners, during a long period, forged shackles for themselves, by confiding too implicitly in the opinions of the ancient physicians. They not only respected these opinions, but defended them as the standards of medical truth, and considered them as the only sure and safe guides. Satisfied with the practice which they had found sanctioned by men of eminence, nothing, they thought, was to be expected, or enquired for, beyond the pale of their authority. Thus they had never presumed to think or reason for themselves with that free and unfettered mind which they ought to have preserved. Nay, even we, in our day, are still disposed to bend with too humble deference to the fathers of physic.

A prepossession too in favor of our own early speculations, represses that freedom of enquiry so necessary to the improvement of medicine. Under this prepossession, practitioners do not always see what is passing before their eyes in a just and proper light, they are thus apt to be deceived themselves, and to give to their observations a shade of colouring which deceives others.

I do not dwell with pleasure upon these causes, which I apprehend have retarded the progress of medicine. I venerate the memory of those of our predecessors, whose labors have obtained for the healing art, an important rank in the estimation of mankind. As they have occasionally failed, however, in promoting the advancement of medicine, we ought to take a lesson

from their failure, and avoid the circumstances which occasioned it. We should not tamely acquiesce in opinions, how respectable soever from age and authority. We should receive, with laudable distrust, statements of facts proposed by others, 'till such time as we ascertain their accuracy. We should scrupulously examine whatever may have appeared to us of importance in theory or practice, before we either adopt it ourselves, or bring it under the review of others. And above all, we ought carefully to shun hasty conclusions and generalizations, which proceed only upon reasoning from matter of opinion."—HAMILTON.

These are weighty considerations, and ought to excite our attention to any irregularity of the alvine evacuation. The necessity for this will further appear, when we reflect that many circumstances, unavoidable in social life, such as improper food, intemperance, sedentary occupations in confined and tainted air, expose mankind in a peculiar manner to constipation. Besides, in a therapeutic view, we are encouraged to exercise this attention. It is admitted that diuretic and diaphoretic medicines employed to remedy interrupted secretion by the skin and kidneys operate circuitously, often possess deleterious qualities, or are uncertain and irregular in their effect; while the means of removing constipation act directly on the seat of the disease, are safe, and seldom disappoint us in the attainment of our object.

The diseases of the stomach and bowels are many and important: they have excited much theoretical discussion, and have called forth a variety of practices. To enter, however, upon so extensive a subject, and to investigate it in a satisfactory manner, would be to engage myself beyond my present intention. I propose to confine my observations within narrow limits; and to take a practical view of a few diseases only, which I have ascertained to originate in constipation of the body, or at least to have an intimate connection with it.

There is certainly nothing new in the position, *the loaded state of the intestinal canal commonly duces general bad health*: but when I allege that

state accompanies and aggravates other conditions of disease ; and that it is the immediate cause of certain disorders incident to children, and young persons, I know that I advance opinions in which there may be considerable novelty ; but in which I trust, the following sheets will satisfy the medical reader, there is an equal degree of soundness. For I have learned that the due regulation of the alvine discharge constitutes much of the prophylactic part of medicine, and teaches the propriety of advising those who wish to preserve good health, or to recover it when it is impaired, to attend carefully to this circumstance. In this view, it may be proper, on some occasions, to counsel the valedudinarian to forsake the haunts and habits of fashionable life ; to quit the crowded city, alluring amusements, and various occupations carried on in airless, or even tainted rooms ; to retrace the steps by which he has deviated from simple nature, and to court the country, pure air,* and simple diet. It may not, however, be convenient at all times to follow this advice, and altho' followed, it may not always remove constipation and its attendant evils. In this event, as well as in those cases where constipation induces or accompanies disease, the interposition of aperient medicine becomes necessary ; but here let me make a remark

* The influence of climate and local station on the alimentary organs is not only conspicuously observable under distant and different degrees of latitude, but the changes induced by atmospheric phenomena alone upon various functions of the animal economy, intrude themselves upon the notice of every one, without any change of station or worldly avocation ; if the views of our physical structure, which I have endeavoured to set forth, be duly borne in mind, it will not be difficult to conceive how readily the animal machine may become affected by changes in the condition of the air, as it regards either its purity or temperature. As, however, atmospheric influence on the alimentary organs is more especially my object, the former consideration must not detain us in this place ; and although caprice and prejudice have uplifted their voices against the doctrine I hold, it is just as reasonable to deny that the lungs are of any importance to the office of respiration, as that the air of the atmosphere does not influence the state and condition of the whole animal economy ; if we admit that it *exerts an influence physically*, we must also admit that it *exerts no less influence morally*, since it is unquestionable that the mind *is in a great measure governed by the state of the stomach and* *wels.*

upon an objection to the use of aperients, which is often urged with a force that appears to carry conviction with it. It is observed that the constant application of stimulating articles, creates a habit not only of using them, but entails, also, the necessity of occasionally increasing their stimulating power. Habit or custom will indeed reconcile us to the impression produced by unusual stimuli; and will counteract their effect in such a manner, that if the stimulus be suddenly withdrawn, or, which is about the same thing, be not gradually increased, the function of the organ to which it had been applied, will become languid or irregular; this law of the economy, no doubt, extends to the promiscuous use of aperients, during the enjoyment of perfect health. In many instances, however, of disease, constipation, and the accumulation of feces, demand this stimulus to restore the healthy state of the intestines; and to promote the expulsion of their indurated contents. In proportion as these objects are accomplished, the stimulus from the same aperient, becomes more and more powerful; and so little is the necessity for continuing it, or for increasing its dose, that, on the contrary, were not the activity of the aperient diminished, or were it not withdrawn altogether, as convalescence advances, we should be in danger of inducing weakness by excess of purging.

Aperient medicine has also been thought unnecessary on this account: that in many diseases little food is taken, and therefore regular alvine evacuations are neither requisite nor to be expected. The residue of food unfit for the purpose of nutrition, constitutes, no doubt, its share of feculent matter: yet, the abundant secretions from different organs, and the exhalations of excrementitious fluids made into the cavity of the intestines, constitutes the bulk of the feces collected within them; so long therefore as fluid is supplied, and so long as the circulation is supported, and secretion promoted, it is equally easy to understand how feces are produced, independant of much solid food, as to perceive the necessity of their daily evacuation, during the course of febrile and other diseases long continuance.

The facts detailed in the following pages justify this inference, that aperients may be employed with more freedom, and with more benefit than is commonly imagined; the practice which leads to this conclusion is presented in a simple form; it is neither disguised by hypothesis, nor obscured by the simultaneous employment of various remedies. At the same time, it is supported by proofs of unquestionable authenticity, which are not surpassed by any in the records of medicine. On these accounts, the truth or fallacy of my opinions may be easily investigated, and an adequate judgment of them readily formed.

In conducting this practice by aperients, however, two circumstances to which I have occasionally alluded, are of so great importance, that I here bring them again under the notice of the reader. One is the regular inspection of the alvine egesta; the other the steady prosecution of the treatment; by the former, the nature of the alvine discharge is ascertained, and, in so far as it is connected with this, a probable conjecture of the ailment is formed, and the requisite dose of the medicine, and the time for its repetition determined.

Again, the steady exhibition of aperient medicine is absolutely necessary to the success of the practice in the chronic diseases of which I have spoken: the puny state of the sufferer may, on some occasions, excite alarm in the breast of the practitioner; and the caprice of the patient, and the whims of relatives, may oppose obstacles to his conducting the cure in a most advantageous manner; but these he must disregard: for unless he can suppress his own improper feelings, and overcome the unreasonable objections of others, he had better not adopt measures which, to prove successful, must be conducted with firmness. A contrary conduct will necessarily terminate in the vexation of the practitioner; in the disappointment of the patient and his relatives; and in the discredit of that practice which it has been my wish and study to recommend.

If some of the diseases of which I have treated, be cured solely by aperient medicine, and if this be effected, more or less, speedily, in proportion to the length of time, the changed nature of the feces, have

subsisted, I am persuaded that the preservation of regularity in the alvine evacuation, will, at all times, prevent the accession of those diseases; it is fitting, therefore, that this observation should be widely spread; that it should be conveyed to mothers and nurses; to superintendents of nurseries, of manufactories, and of boarding schools, and to all instructors and protectors of children, and of young people, and strongly impressed upon their minds by such of their medical advisers as think, with me, that to prevent disease, is their paramount duty.

To conclude, the reader must have observed the beneficial effects of aperients in diseases apparently different, and incident to people at various periods of life: the fact is undeniable, and serves to prove the extent and importance of the subject; but of this, I do not feel it incumbent upon me to give an explanation at present—the attempt would be premature. I am satisfied with having established certain leading facts, and to have opened views which will give opportunity to extend our knowledge respecting the utility of aperients. It may then be time to generalize the facts, and to form a system of medical doctrines at once clear and comprehensive; and thence to deduce practical precepts, useful in proportion as they are simple and precise. When these expectations are fulfilled, our posterity may see deceptive reasoning, how ingenious soever, banish from the schools of medicine, and from the practice of the healing art, a multifarious routine of inert and nauseous remedies.—HAMILTON.

FROM MR. JAMES RUSSELL TO THE AUTHOR.

MY DEAR SIR,

I shall be happy to give you an account of the case of my daughter, whom you and Mr. Benjamin Bell did me the favor to attend; the child was then about three years old, and had been falling off in her health some time before you saw her, she was then pale and languid, with a quick pulse, loaded tongue, and impaired appetite; but as she was reported to have had regular daily

evacuations of her bowels, none of these symptoms were ascribed to costiveness. Soon after you began to visit her, however, you suspected an accumulation of feces to be the chief cause of her complaint, and wished to treat the case according to this view; but notwithstanding every proper remedy was applied without loss of time, she got gradually worse for some days, until at last she shewed some tendency to stupor, accompanied with pain in her head, and throbbing of her temples; the presence of these symptoms suggested a suspicion of an incipient attack of hydrocephalus, which made so strong an impression upon the attendants, that leeches were applied to the head, and the blood discharged produced some temporary relief. Notwithstanding all these variations in the symptoms, however, you still continued steady to your original opinion, and persevered in the practice of giving aperient medicine. Perseverance in this plan gradually unloaded the bowels from a quantity of feculent matter which appeared to have been lodged for a considerable time, and procured very manifest relief. From the time of this salutary discharge, the symptoms became daily more moderate, until at last the recovery was complete.

Upon reviewing all the circumstances of this case, which naturally attracted much of my attention, I regard it as a satisfactory illustration of your opinion respecting the effects of costiveness, in exciting much distress, and in producing symptoms which counterfeit diseases that are generally supposed to have a very different origin.

I am, with much respect,

My dear Sir,

Ever most sincerely yours,

JAMES RUSSELL.

FROM MR. BENJAMIN BELL, SURGEON, TO
THE AUTHOR.

DEAR SIR,

As you favored me with the perusal of the manuscript which you are about to publish, on the utility of

aperient medicine in certain diseases, and as the practice which you inculcate meets with my entire approbation, I think it right to communicate to you a remarkable instance of the good effects of the practice which has recently occurred to me, in one of the most fatal diseases with which we are acquainted.

On Wednesday the 4th instant, I received an anxious call from a family newly arrived at one of our hotels, from the distance of forty miles, with their eldest daughter, a girl about eight years of age, who had become unwell on Saturday the 24th of August; but her symptoms, when I visited her, were severe head-ache, greatly aggravated by motion, pulse 96, and irregular; the pupil of each eye was more dilated than in health, scarcity of urine and uncommon dryness of the skin, and no discharge from the nose.

All the remedies that are commonly used in ordinary cases of head-ache had been prescribed without any advantage; such as the local discharge of blood by leeches, and the discharge produced by a blister and gentle dose of calomel and jalap.

The symptoms being aggravated by the journey, I advised leeches to be applied, and a laxative of calomel and jalap to be given, which operated properly, and afforded relief. The head was likewise shaved; but the case being highly important, I advised an early consultation, which being agreed to by the family, Dr. Monro, senior, and Mr. James Russell, Surgeon, one of my partners, met with me accordingly next morning. The opinion adopted at this consultation was, that the symptoms were those of hydrocephalus internus. We directed a grain of calomel, and the same quantity of powder of foxglove to be given three times a day; a drachm of the stronger mercurial ointment to be rubbed on her limbs, evening and morning; a blister to be applied to the crown of the head; and the powder of betony to be used as snuff, in order to excite a discharge from the nose.

This plan was continued, and in the course of the third day the gums were red and swelled, but still no benefit was derived from the mercury. The pain of the head had been relieved by the leeches, but it soon be

came as violent as before ; the iris was, in a considerable degree, insensible to the stimulus of light, and the pulse was quick and irregular.

With these symptoms, she now complained of severe pain in her bowels, which led to the suspicion of their being oppressed with an accumulation of feces, notwithstanding the laxatives which had been given. A full dose therefore of an aperient was again exhibited, on the morning of the 9th instant. Next day we found that it had purged briskly, not less than nine times, and at every motion a large quantity of black-colored feces, fully formed and uncommonly fetid, had been discharged.

Perceiving that she was relieved, her head being less painful, and the pulse more regular, another dose of the aperient was given early in the forenoon of the 11th, and the mercurial medicines were omitted : this dose also operated briskly, and brought off, notwithstanding the large evacuations of the preceding day, six or seven copious stools, all of them uncommonly fetid, and of a dark color. She suffered much from sickness, oppression, and gripes, during the operation of both doses of the aperient, but immediately after the last dose every symptom of the disease vanished ; the headache was felt only on quick motion ; her eyes recovered their natural appearance ; her pulse was regular ; and she became equally alert as in her best health.

On the 12th she had a third dose of the aperient, not, however, so strong as the preceding ones, but nevertheless it procured three or four stools, less fetid than the former, and of more natural appearance.

On the morning of the 13th, our patient informed us that she was cured of all her complaints ; and her mother, who watched her carefully in every stage of her illness, said, that ever since the operation of the aperients, she, as well as the servants, had remarked that a disagreeable noise, which took place during the sleep of our patient for several years, and which was occasioned by the grinding of her teeth, had ceased.

As our patient continued perfectly well, she was permitted to return to the country on the 17th instant.

Her mother was directed to give her repeated laxatives for some time, to prevent immediate accumulation of feces, and to interpose them on any occasion in future, when the stools appeared to be unnatural or not sufficiently copious.

I remain, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,

BENJAMIN BELL.

MR. JAMES LAW, SURGEON, TO THE AUTHOR.

DEAR SIR,

Soon after the second edition of your publication appeared, I had occasion to treat a case of hysteria agreeably to your views. The circumstance of the case and of the cure seem so strongly marked in favor of the treatment which you recommend, that I cannot refrain from giving you a short account of it.

About the middle of last September, Miss E. R. applied to me for my advice in certain nervous complaints under which she had laboured for about six years.

They had begun about the age of fourteen, when the menstrual discharge first threatened to appear.

Lassitude, loss of appetite, diminution of strength, wasting of flesh, a pallid look, a dullness of spirit, with frequent violent hysterical* paroxysms (sometimes two or three of them a day), were the symptoms most prominent at the time when she applied to me. Her bowels were habitually and obstinately costive; but the menstrual discharge was pretty regular. At the commencement of her illness she had fainting fits only, which did not occur at first oftener than once a month, and about the period of menstruation. Gradually they

* Having described the nerves, I now come to the symptoms which are easily explained by their connection. I will begin with tremor of the feet, which is common in hysterical cases, but I ought, in the first place, to mention that the dreadful hysterical symptoms which we daily see either in individual parts, or in the whole body, are altogether dependant upon the accumulation of acrid matter in the bowels, for the intolerable foetor, the scantiness and unnatural appearance of the feces, always warn us of an approaching paroxysm of rigors and convulsions.—Camper.

became more frequent, occurring once in a fortnight, and once in eight days, until at last they became to attack her several times a day; and in July last, took the marked form of violent hysteria.

Before I saw her, she had consulted various respectable practitioners in the north of England, where she resided; and had used a great number of medicines, of which she could give us no account, except that one which she took by spoonfuls made her very heavy and stupid; and that she knew she had taken a great deal of valerian and assafoetida.

She had been advised to come here to use the warm baths at Portabello, the cold bathing having previously failed in relieving her.

I resolved to attempt the cure in your method, and gave her aperients in the form of pills, in such doses and at such short intervals as might effectually evacuate the contents of the intestines. As she lived at Portabello, in the vicinity of Edinburgh, I gave her mother strict injunctions to examine the egesta, and to bring me a particular account of their appearance.

From five to eight pills brought off, by account, a great load of fetid, dark-coloured, hardened feces.

She was directed to continue the pills, two every night, which she did for some time.

Her bowels now became more easily moved; and one pill every night, or even one in two or three nights, has been sufficient to regulate the alvine discharge.

The result has been, that from the first effect of the aperient medicine, she has not had the slightest attack of hysteria, except once, and that no more than a threatening, occasioned by fatigue and over-heating herself.

She has recovered her appetite, her strength, flesh, and colour, and from being dull and inanimate, has become lively and in good spirits.

Being in the neighbourhood of the baths, she has taken the tepid sea-bath four times, but I cannot ascribe her cure in any degree to this, as she did not use it until some time after the hysterical fits had disappeared.

I am, dear Sir, Yours truly,
JAMES LAW.

A CASE.

A young woman of delicate constitution, but not subject to general bad health, was seized with frequent violent and bound cough, unattended with pain of breast, dyspnœa, quickness of pulse or heat of surface. In order to mitigate the cough, the severity of which excited much alarm lest rupture of vessels and hæmoptysis should ensue, blood-letting was practised once and again; and a blister was applied to the breast, while a low regimen was enjoined, and laudanum was given to procure sleep, which the cough had altogether banished. These means, so likely to have procured relief, were of no avail.

The experience of the effect of some aperient medicine which had been given in the course of the disease, proved that the patient was either of a peculiarly constipated habit of body, or laboured under temporary constipation. It seemed, therefore, reasonable to me as well as to another practitioner in attendance, to force the alvine evacuation by more powerful aperients than we had as yet employed. We succeeded, but not without difficulty, in obtaining the object in view. The appearance and odour of the feces evinced their morbid state, while the quantity that was dislodged, proved that the feculent accumulation had been great, and that there was no doubt of these circumstances having been the cause of the ailment: for the cessation of the cough; and the progress of convalescence kept pace with the gradual unloading of the bowels. Our patient was so satisfied of this, that she readily agreed to follow out a course of aperient medicines, in order to preserve her bowels in a regular state of daily and full evacuation.

This patient, four months afterwards, had another attack of pectoral symptoms, different, however, from the former one. She now complained of acute fixed pain across the lower part of the sternum; aggravated by the gentlest bodily exertion; and attended by great languor and feebleness. Her appetite was altogether gone, she passed sleepless nights, her countenance betokened much distress, her cheeks were alternate

flushed and pale, with these symptoms she had no cough, and when completely at rest, even in a recumbent posture, no dyspnæa.

On the first attack the pain was so violent as to threaten instant suffocation, which appeared to have been averted only by a prompt and copious bleeding. Blood-letting was afterwards repeated, which, as well as blistering, was of no use. The application of leeches seemed to mitigate the pain, and on account of it low diet was enjoined.

The other practitioner in attendance, and I, trusting to the account of our patient, and to the appearance of one alvine evacuation, were satisfied that the belly was regular, and were the more readily so as our patient, ever since her former indisposition, had been accustomed to attend to this circumstance.

Disappointed in our expectation of relief, we now became seriously alarmed, dreading the existence of vomica, with which we connected apprehension of phthisis. These fears were not altogether concealed from the friends of our patient, who immediately asked the assistance of another medical gentleman.

Our joint opinion now turned upon the probability that the disease might depend upon nervous irritation. Exercise in the open air, a fuller diet, and a tonic powder and mixture were proposed. The patient's inability to bear the slightest motion, and her total want of appetite, precluded compliance with the two first proposals; and the tonic medicines, taken with great reluctance, were scarcely in use, when a copious fluid, dark-coloured, and peculiarly fetid stool, arrested our attention. The previous history of this patient's health, and the present occurrence, indicated clearly our line of practice: much fetid feculent matter was brought off by appropriate aperients; immediate abatement of pain took place, and complete relief, in all respects, soon ensued; in eight or ten days no vestige of complaint remained; the patient is now perfectly well.

*Substance of the Narrative of her own Case transmitted
by a Lady to the Author.*

In the end of June, as a summer residence, I went to the neighbourhood of Moffat, in perfect health, for the sake of a walk, and social amusement, I every morning repaired to the sulphurous spring, and drank a bottle of the water, and being of a full habit, which I found a little reduced by the exercise and use of the water ; I persisted in this until the beginning of September, then I became much annoyed during the night with a most profuse cold perspiration, which could not be removed by the application of heat. Sleep entirely left me, for I no sooner closed my eyes than I was roused by frightful nervous startings, and a confusion in my head, so strange that I dreaded approaching derangement.

I was informed that my ailment was a stomach attack occasioned by my having over drunk the water, and was ordered an infusion of bark, &c., which a good deal relieved me. I got home pretty free from the above complaints, but with a stomach so weakened that there were very few things which I durst admit into it without suffering great pain in consequence. Bitters, air, and exercise were recommended, these I used all the winter without any material change, except becoming very thin ; all this time I was so obstinately costive that I never had a passage without the aid of powerful aperients. As spring advanced I lost my strength and flesh entirely ; each stomach-attack leaving me weaker and weaker. Costiveness was now considered to be the principal disease, and the pain of the stomach only the consequence of it, and aperient pills, a laxative diet, and moderate exercise were recommended.

When I became your patient towards the end of July of the following year, I was reduced to a skeleton, and scarcely able to creep about, and so costive that it required sixteen of the pills which you ordered to procure a passage. In the course of one week half the number had an equally good effect, and at the end of a fortnight four pills were sufficient : the feces the

began to assume a natural appearance, and the intolerable smell from them abated; during the above period the quantity of strange unnatural stuff discharged from my bowels was inconceivable; and my strength so far from being wasted, was daily increasing with a light and comfortable feeling of returning health, to which I had been long a stranger. About the middle of August I went a little way into the country and took a mercurial medicine, which kept my bowels open, and made my mouth sore after the first dose; you then ordered me a powder, a dose of which I took twice a day with a laxative effect.

Since the commencement of this course of medicine, I have had few returns of the pain of my stomach, and these but slight. I now take, without any fear, moderate exercise, and a variety of simple foods. I sleep amazingly well, my appetite and spirits are excellent, my flesh and strength are returning daily.

N.B.—I have frequently heard of this lady since; with slight interruptions, she has enjoyed good health from the above to the present time.

FROM MR. JAMES ANDERSON, SURGEON,
TO THE AUTHOR.

MY DEAR SIR,—The enclosed are the principal circumstances of the case which I mentioned the other day, you may use what liberty you choose with them if you think they can be of any service.

Mrs. B., aged 40, about five years ago was seized with pain and sense of weight in the left lumbar region. She was at the time about six months pregnant.

A warm plaster was applied to the part, and she was desired to keep her bowels open with supetartrate of potash.

After delivery, which was accomplished by a quick and natural labour, the pain was not in the least abated, but in other respects recovery from the puerperal state went on as usual.

For a few months from this period, the pain became more severe and diffused, shooting towards the interior

part of the abdomen; the limbs were considerably debilitated, swelled, and pained, and she was soon altogether unable to walk without crutches.

She had recourse to a variety of medicines, and also to cold and warm bathing without benefit.

These symptoms continued with little variation during five years, in this interval she became twice pregnant, the first labour was laborious, the second preternatural.

She now lost confidence in medicine, and despaired of regaining her former strength, when she was informed that a female acquaintance had recovered from similar ailments of three years duration, by the use of aperients. Mrs. B. resorted to the same means, and the strength of her limbs were speedily restored, so that within three weeks she was able to walk five or six miles a day without crutch or staff. She describes the stools to have been dark-coloured, copious, lumpy, and very fetid; she had a copious flow of urine while under the operation of the aperients.

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